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CHARACTERISTICS AND EMPHASES OF THE JAPANESE
CHURCH ON THE PACIFIC COAST

A Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Missions

Berkeley Baptist Divinity School

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

by

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March 9, 1942



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

Methods of Investigation

Chapter I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 1

Japanese Immigration Into the United States

Character of Immigrants

Causes of Japanese Immigration

Geographical Distribution

Occupational Status

Chapter II. BEGINNINGS AND EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY 9

San Francisco

Los Angeles

Seattle

Other Localities

Table of Churches

Chapter III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JAPANESE CHURCH 28

Source of Membership

Language

Financial Support

Indifference Toward Denominations

Leadership

Place of Literature

Conflict With Traditional Religions of Japan

Traditional Elements in the Church

Chapter IV. EMPHASES OF THE JAPANESE CHURCH	42
Institutional Work of the Past	
Present Social Program	
Cooperation	
Evangelism	
Chapter V. THE NISEI CHURCH	56
Extent of English Services	
Assuming of Financial and Leadership Responsibilities	
Theological Points of View	
The Future	
Chapter VI. CONCLUSION	62

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Seattle," 1920-21

The North American Advocate, May 1941, Vol. 24, Page 5

D. LETTERS

Marvel Maeda,	El Centro, Calif.
The Rev. J. K. Fukushima,	Montebello, Calif.
Shunji Nishibayashi,	Los Angeles, Calif.
Mildred L. Cummings,	Woman's Amer. Bapt. Home Mission Soc.
Mrs. A. G. Scudder,	Los Angeles, Calif.
Sadaichi Asai,	Terminal Island, Calif.
Kayoko Asai,	" " "
Harper Sakaue,	Clearwater, Calif.
Kenji Nakane,	Coachella, Calif.
Fred Fertig,	Mountain View, Calif.
The Rev. Jitsuo Morikawa,	Gardena, Calif.
Hiroshi Kaneko,	Salem, Oregon

E. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Major Abe,	Salvation Army, San Francisco
The Rev. K. Nozaki,	Seventh Day Adventist Church, San Francisco
The Rev. T. Kaneko,	Japanese Reformed Church, San Francisco
The Rev. T. Goto,	Japanese Methodist Church, San Francisco

The Rev. S. Sano,	Japanese Baptist Mission, San Francisco
The Rev. J. Tsukamoto,	Episcopal Church, San Francisco
Mrs. Miyamoto,	Catholic Language School, San Francisco
Mr. Kanai,	Executive Secretary, Y.M.C.A., San Francisco
The Rev. Mr. Kawamorita,	Church of Christ, San Francisco
Miss Kimi Mukaye,	Japanese Y.W.C.A., San Francisco
Father Tibesar,	Maryknoll Mission, Seattle
Miss Florence Rumsey,	Japanese Baptist Church, Seattle
The Rev. S. Hashimoto,	" " " "
The Rev. I. Inouye,	Seventh Day Adventist Church, Seattle
Shizuo Yamada,	President, Northwest Young People's Christian Fed.
Mr. W. S. Terazawa,	Ex. Sec. General Council of Japanese Christian Church Federations of North America, Seattle
The Rev. D. Kitagawa,	St. Paul's Mission, Kent; and St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Seattle
Mrs. Takahashi,	Berkeley
Mr. Togasaki,	Berkeley
The Rev. M. Nishimura,	Free Methodist Church, Berkeley
Dr. F. H. Smith,	Superintendent of the Japanese Methodist churches
The Rev. K. Kimura,	Japanese Baptist, Sacramento
The Rev. N. Ozaki,	Independent Church, Oakland
Robert Sakai,	Indio, Calif.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is twofold: firstly, to satisfy the curiosity of the writer as to the background, history, and growth of the Japanese Church on the Pacific Coast; and secondly, to determine its characteristics and points of emphases. There is a dearth of material in this field and so the present study was made in order that an understanding could be had on this special phase and some sort of a contribution made to the general history of missions. Probing into the religious heritage of the Japanese in America has yielded rich dividends in inspiration and insights. As a result of this study there has resulted an increased appreciation not only of the Japanese Christian Church on the Pacific Coast, but also of the Christian heritage which prompted and moved this group of people into such challenging forms of concrete expression of their faith.

Three avenues of investigation have been utilized in this project. Firstly, all the available books and literature on the general field were examined. Secondly, questionnaires and personal letters were sent out to different pastors and laymen. Response in the field of correspondence was relatively fair, about 30% responding with answers. Finally, personal interviews were made. Through such means the findings and conclusions in this study have been derived.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A historical background is imperative if we are to understand the Japanese Church and how it came to grow in the United States. It is interesting to note that the first Japanese church came into being when the population of the Japanese was around the century mark. The population in 1880 was 148; the first church was established in 1877. A necessarily brief survey of the history of Japanese immigration, character of immigrants, the causes for their coming, geographical distribution, and occupational status, will give a perspective and understanding as to the background out of which the Japanese Church arose.

I. Japanese Immigration Into The United States

A chain of islands mostly volcanic in nature, shaped like a dragon-fly, rises from the blue Pacific only a few miles from the great continent of Asia. Relatively, only a few years ago peace held sway over a feudal and self-contained hermit empire. Medieval Japan slept as the nations of the world arose in power, in knowledge of modern science, modern trade, and modern warfare. However, this slumbering nation was to be rudely awakened and flung into the full stream of modern life.

In 1853 the black ships of Commodore Perry of the United States navy virtually forced Japan to open her doors, and in 1854 and 1855 Japan signed commercial treaties with the United States, Great

1. Ichihashi, Y., Japanese In America, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, Calif., 1934, p. 64
2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Racial Composition of the Population of the United States by States: 1940, Series P-10, #1, p. 2
3. Matsui, S., Economic Aspects of Japanese In America, University of California at Berkeley, 1922, M.A. Thesis, p. 3

Britain, and Russia. Thus began the dawn of a new era. The old feudal ways were swept away and Japan found herself in a modern world of progress and improvement. From that time on, Japanese gradually found their way into different parts of the world. In 1870 there were only 55 Japanese in the United States, in 1880 the number was 148. But it was not until the year 1885 that the Japanese Government authorized its subjects to go abroad.

The Japanese population in the United States shows a steady and very rapid growth:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u> ¹
1870	55
1880	148
1890	2,039
1900	24,326
1910	72,157
1920	111,010
1930	138,834
1940	126,947 ²

The sudden increase in 1890 can be explained by the following reasons:

1. The Chinese Exclusion Law, passed in 1882
2. Japan's legalization of emigration in 1885
3. The rapid industrial and agricultural development of the Pacific Coast ³

The majority of those who had been admitted before 1900 showed a tendency to settle in this country, but this tendency began to change radically thereafter. Between 1861 and 1900 some 30,077 were admitted, and the 1900 census enumerated 24,326 Japanese; the difference between these figures, namely, 5,751, must indicate the number who returned to Japan if the deaths are left out. In fact, Japanese official records show 5,130 as returned. Of the 104,618 admitted be-

1. Ichihashi, Y., Op. Cit., p. 65

tween 1901 and 1910 only 47,831 are accounted for in connection with the census figures of the Japanese for 1910. The remaining 56,777 somehow disappeared from this country during this decade. In most probability they were "birds of passage". This tendency to return became more and more intensified in the next decade (1910-1920), when 87,576 arrivals were reported, and 70,404 departures, leaving a net gain of only 17,172. In other words, the departures constituted 80 per cent of the number of arrivals during the decade. The next four years, 1921-1924, saw even an excess of departures over arrivals by 1,121 while the four years 1925-1928, with the Exclusion law in operation, experienced a similar excess of 12,938 departures. Thus during 1921-1928, the alien Japanese population incurred a loss by departures to the extent of 14,148.¹ The 1940 census reveals a decrease of 11,887 or 8.6 per cent during the ten year period from 1930. This loss may be accounted for by (1) departures, and (2) mortality of old people.

At first the immigrant is welcomed, but as he increases in number and becomes an economic competitor, reaction sets in. This had been in the case of the Chinese who were excluded in 1882. With the increasing number of Japanese entering this country, the first anti-Japanese agitation in the United States broke out as early as 1887, or five years after the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Law. Sporadic anti-Japanese agitation took place in the following years, which would be tedious and beside the point to mention. However, of interest is the crystallization of sentiment shown in the passage, on October 11, 1906, by the San Francisco Board of Education of a measure which excluded Japanese children from the regular public

1. Buell, R. L., Japanese Immigration, World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, Vol. III, #'s 5-6, World Peace Foundation, 40 Mt. Vernon St., Boston, p. 288

4

schools. President Theodore Roosevelt stepped in at this crucial time to uphold the right of the alien Japanese in America. The outcome of the affair was the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08.

In this agreement the Japanese government was permitted to issue passports to non-laborers, but it promised not to issue passports to laborers, skilled or unskilled, wishing to go to the continental United States with the exception of two main classes:

1. Those who return to resume a formerly acquired domicile
2. Parents, wives, and children, under twenty years of age, of laborers in the United States¹

The Gentlemen's Agreement was not embodied in a treaty submitted to and approved by the Senate of the United States. It was merely an "executive agreement".

This plus the prohibition of Japanese migration from Hawaii, Mexico, and Canada proved effective in checking the flow of the alien Japanese. However, the anti-Japanists in California were not satisfied. The state legislature was flooded with anti-Japanese bills, none of which, however, became law until 1913, when an alien law was enacted. Similar laws were adopted in Washington, Oregon, Arizona, and other states where Japanese were engaged in agriculture. The anti-Japanese movement was largely confined to the West and was therefore local in character.

After the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the relationship between Japan and America went from bad to worse. War clouds began to hover over the hitherto friendly nations. A silver lining in the dark clouds appeared in the Washington Conference of 1921-22 which swept away the dark and clarified the situation.

1. Ichihashi, Y., Op. Cit., p. 67

Unfortunately, however, in the autumn of 1922 the Supreme Court of the United States rendered its decision that Japanese are ineligible to citizenship under the existing naturalization law.

Two years later the humiliating Exclusion Law was passed. This discriminatory measure differed from the Gentlemen's Agreement in that it transferred the administration of exclusion from Japan to the United States and imposed more stringent restrictions. It was an unfortunate move on the part of Congress and a source of regret to many Americans.

II. Character Of The Immigrants

The early days of Japanese immigration reveal a large percentage of students among its ranks. Reduced to the percentage basis the occupational status of immigrants from 1886-1908 reveal the following:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Percentage</u> ¹
Merchants	21.5
Laborers	21.4
Students	21.1
Farmers and fishermen	14.1
Artisans	3.8
Others	18.1
Total	100.0

These occupations do not necessarily mean that they were followed here, but merely indicate the classes from which the immigrants were drawn.

As explained previously the growth of the Japanese population during 1908-1928 was insignificant due to the operation of the Gentlemen's Agreement and the great number of laboring men who left the coun-

1. Ichihashi, Y., Ibid., p. 69

2. Ichihashi, Y., Ibid., p. 72

3. Matsui, S., Op. Cit., p. 4,5

try. A bare 2,574 was added to the population.¹ However, a significant change took place in the increase of women and children. Under the Gentlemen's Agreement picture brides were permitted, so until the Japanese government voluntarily stopped issuing passports to the so-called picture brides in 1920, the influx of women constituted a drastic change in the character of immigration. The increase of women between the years 1900 and 1920 is as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number²</u>
1900	985
1910	9,087
1920	38,303

III. Causes of Immigration

Most of the immigrants to this country were young men. The Immigration Commission found that almost twenty-three in each hundred had come to the United States when under twenty years of age, and that more than one half had come when under twenty-five. On the other hand, only about twenty-five in each hundred were thirty or upward, and less than five in each hundred forty or over.³

The primary motive seems to have been economic. These young men hearing tales of a new country of opportunity had embarked to share in its fabulous wealth. The concensus of opinion is that this is the prime, fundamental reason for Japanese immigration. Neither religion nor politics were causative factors.

A negative factor which played a part was the military conscription law. Many came to escape the required military service of three years. Emigration agents were instrumental in the movement to

1. Ichihashi, Y., Op. Cit., p. 87
2. U.S. Department of Commerce, Op. Cit., p. 3
3. Strong, E. K., The Second-Generation Problem, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, Calif., quoted from Y. Ichihashi, Japanese Immigration, 1915, pp. 21-22; p. 214

Hawaii, but they played an insignificant role in Japanese immigration to America.¹

IV. Geographical Distribution

The majority of Japanese residents in this country are found primarily in the Pacific States: California, Oregon, and Washington. California leads with a population of 93,717 or 73.8% of the total Japanese population in the United States. Washington follows with 14,565 and Oregon third with 4,071. Some 8,574 are found in the Mountain States: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. The remainder, 6,020, are scattered in various sections of the United States.²

V. Occupational Status

In studying the occupational pursuits of the early immigrant one is struck by the diversity of work which was followed. The lack of permanence is a characteristic. In the words of one authority:

The majority of Japanese farmers being tenants, share or contract, lack a permanent character. Independent farmers of today may become mere farm hands of tomorrow and vice versa. The majority of merchants are keepers of insignificantly small shops, they too come and go in quick order. Laborers are mostly unskilled; therefore, they shift from one occupation to another according to the seasons, and indeed, according to their whims and fancies. Clerks may become domestic servants at any moment. Domestic servants may take a fancy to farming or to railroad building. Farm hands may become gang hands, and vice versa; these again may work in canneries. They can shift about in these various occupations without any difficulty because none of these occupations requires any high degree of skill. A knowledge of English is necessary in certain occupations, but that too need not be more than elementary.³

Although there has been this shifting back and forth in occupations there have been general directions toward which the Japanese

1. Ibid., pp. 214, 215

2. Pajus, J., The Real Japanese In California, James J. Gillick Co.,
Berkeley, Calif., 1937, pp. 148, 149

3. Ibid., p. 189

have gravitated. E. K. Strong in his study makes the observation that the trend has been from unskilled to a higher form of occupation and from common labor to ownership of farms and businesses.¹ This would be the natural course of events, for the immigrant was desirous of establishing himself and his family in America.

In recent years there has been a shift away from the rural to other pursuits. A decided reduction in land acreage is seen in California after 1920:

<u>Year</u>	<u>U.S. Census</u>	<u>Japanese-Association Census</u>
1920	361,276	458,056
1925		307,966
1930	220,151	290,000
1937		250,000 ²

Whichever column of figures one takes, it will be noticed that there was a great falling off in Japanese land holdings after 1920. In the State of California, there has been a shift from rural to urban pursuits on all fronts:

<u>Occupations Outside of Agriculture³</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>
Professionals	748	1,029
Business (finance, overseas, whole-sale, retail, service, amusements)	4,410	9,403
Domestic Servants	1,482	1,798
Fishermen	1,287	754
Laborers	2,692	2,826
Skilled Laborers	201	974
Students	652	1,120
Miscellaneous	1,424	2,680
	<u>12,896</u>	<u>20,584</u>

1. Sacon, Y. H., A Study of the Religious Organizations in Japanese Communities In America, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1932, p. 27

CHAPTER TWO

BEGINNINGS AND EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY

The history of the Japanese Church on the Pacific Coast is a thrilling and an interesting one. It began in San Francisco and rapidly spread to other centers of Japanese population. Los Angeles and Seattle are the other key points from which the expansion of Christianity took place. A perspective of the Japanese Church will be attempted in this chapter. Detailed growth of every church will not be given, but rather there will be portraits of representative churches.

I. San Francisco

There are two traditions, which vary slightly, as to the formation of the first Japanese church group in America. One is that in 1874 several young men happened to meet at the Powell Street Congregational Church in San Francisco. The Women's Society became interested in them and Mrs. Wilson, one of the members, began a Bible and English class for them. Later, the group arranged to rent the basement of the Chinese Methodist Mission for its headquarters, at the cost of three dollars per month. The greater share of the rent was paid by the Women's Society of the Congregational Church.¹

The other tradition is that a certain young Japanese named Naka used to assemble his friends in his room to spend the evenings in gossip. One of the company became tired of this and suggested that the group participate in Bible study. At the time of this important decision these young men decided to transfer their place of lodging

1. Ichihashi, Y., Op. Cit., p. 107-108

2. Loc. cit.

3. Sacan, Y. H., Op. Cit., p. 27

4. Japanese Church Federation of Northern California, A Handbook of the Japanese Christian Churches in Northern California, Nichiyo Sekai Sha, Osaka, 1936, p. 27

5. Ibid., p. 28,29

to the basement of the Chinese Methodist Mission. Dr. Gibson, superintendent of the mission, began to first teach them English and then later the Bible. In 1877 the entire basement was rented at \$3 a month and the Gospel Society formally organized.¹

The first Christian movement was launched in a basement which received no light even during daytime. Three candles were stuck in the center of a shattered table around which these men sat on empty boxes and adopted their constitution. It was decided that "the society was to be religious in character, but independent of missions and missionaries".² The following resolutions were passed:

1. That the meetings should be held every Saturday night to study the Bible and make speeches in public.
2. That twenty-five cents should be paid as monthly dues.³

Dissension soon overtook the group. In May, 1881, most of the members separated from the original Society and organized the Taylor Gospel Society at 116 Taylor Street (now called Golden Gate Avenue). Two reasons are given for the first schism. The first is that Dr. Gibson, superintendent of the Chinese Society wishing to make this new organization into a Methodist group created ill feeling between the American Methodist and Congregational Churches. A second reason given is that some of the members wished to be separated from the Chinese mission.⁴

In 1883, a second separation took place in the Gospel Society at the Chinese mission. The difficulty was caused by the same reasons as given above. The result was the formation of the "Third Evangelical Association" which united with the Taylor Gospel Society after a short period of time.⁵

1. Ibid., p. 30

2. Ibid., p. 34

3. Brief History of the San Francisco Methodist Church: A Forty Years Review, Sept. 1926, Pamphlet, pp. 7,8

The original Gospel Society was busy at work and had established a mission in Oakland. In 1884, a rift between the two groups took place, resulting in the establishment of a Methodist church in Oakland.¹ During this time, the Gospel Society separated from the Chinese Mission and moved to the adjoining house in June, 1886. In December of that year, the Japanese Methodist Church of San Francisco was organized.²

The following year, 1887, found an ever widening outreach within the Gospel Society. Realizing the need among the Japanese in Hawaii, a special prayer meeting was held which resulted in a special missionary offering of \$24 and the sending forth of one of the members, K. Yoshiyama, as an evangelist to Hawaii. He continued to work for three months after which the Rev. T. Shimizu was sent to take over the responsibility. His work resulted in the establishment of the Japanese Honolulu Mission.³

A revival broke out in the Japanese Methodist Church with the coming of T. Kawabe, an evangelist from Japan, who conducted a series of meetings from July 1889 to December 1891. It was characterized by huge crowds, about 200 for the Sunday meetings, and earnest personal work in hospitals, jails, hotels, and in tract distribution. Within the six months period 400 converts were made and 188 baptisms took place. The far reaching influence of this revival was felt in the establishment of a number of churches up and down the Coast. As a result, in 1892, Japanese Methodist churches were established in San Jose, Sacramento, and Portland; in 1893, Vacaville and Fresno; 1895, Los Angeles and Riverside; 1901, Spokane; 1902, Seattle, and

1. Ibid., p. 8ff, Interview, Mr. Togasaki

2. Excerpt from a report

3. Japanese Church Federation of Northern California, Op. Cit., pp. 40,53

4. Interview, The Rev. T. Kaneko

and 1904, Oxnard and Bakersfield.¹

On May 16, 1885, the members of the Taylor Gospel Society organized the First Japanese Presbyterian Church of San Francisco. At that time a Y.M.C.A. was formed, independent of the church. The person responsible for these groups, Dr. E. A. Sturge, makes this report: "At that time 17 were received by letter, and 15 upon profession of faith and baptism, making 32 in all. The organization was completed by the election of two elders, J. Morita and K. Mitani."² In 1892, the old San Francisco Theological Seminary was purchased and the church removed to the new location.

The Congregational work was founded in conjunction with the establishment of the Chinese mission in 1899. Mr. Pound, director of the Chinese work discovered the need among the Japanese when several came to his Chinese center. In the same year a separate mission for the Japanese was organized.³

Under the leadership of the Rev. J. Mori, the Japanese Reformed Church was established in 1910. The pastor and lay members began their mission work with street corner preaching. A dormitory, employment agency, and an English night school were included as part of the institution. The present Post Street Chapel was purchased from the Plymouth Congregational Church in 1914. An educational building was erected in 1920 through the assistance of the Women's Missionary Society of the Reformed Church.⁴

The first mission among the Episcopalians was established in conjunction with an American church in 1895. An interesting aspect of this mission was that the first priest, the Rev. M. Tai, came from

1. Interview, The Rev. Mr. Tsukamoto

2. Interview, Mrs. Miyamoto

3. Interview, Major Abe

4. Interview, The Rev. K Nozaki

Japan for the express purpose of evangelizing the Japanese in America. As a result of the first Bible class, under Mrs. Jeffries, four young men definitely chose full time Christian service as their career. They were Dr. Mayekawa, a recently appointed bishop in Japan, the Rev. Mr. Yoshimura and the Rev. Mr. Murakami, both in Japan, and the Rev. Mr. Yamazaki of Los Angeles.¹

In 1912, a Catholic mission was established. The Maryknoll order took over the project in 1920 and instituted a parochial school for Japanese children. At present, 270 pupils are enrolled, which includes full time pupils up to and including the eighth grade, and Japanese language students of high school age. Membership in the Church is approximately 250, nearly all of whom are the direct result of the parochial school.²

Under the leadership of Major Kobayashi, the Salvation Army movement was started in the year 1919. A well-equipped children's home and social center were established in 1937, at the cost of \$120,000. This institution was the result of a nation-wide solicitation for funds on the part of Major Kobayashi. Donations came even from Japan, the Emperor himself donating 5000 yen.³

The Seventh Day Adventist group under the leadership of the Rev. K. Nozaki began in the year 1923 with a Bible Study Institute. In 1928, a church was organized, the first among the Seventh Day Adventist Japanese.⁴

Of interest is the recently developed Japanese Baptist Mission started by the Rev. S. Sano under the auspices of the Hamilton Square

1. Interview, The Rev. S. Sano

2. Ozaki, Norio, A Survey of Inter-Denominational Cooperation Within Each of Three Japanese Religions in Los Angeles: Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity, Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Religion at the University of Southern California, 1941, ch. III

3. Fisher, M., clipping, source unknown

Baptist Church. This mission, which was organized in 1939, meets regularly in the home of the pastor. A commendable contribution of this group is its sponsorship of an English class.¹

II. Los Angeles

The Christian Church found its further development in the center of a rapidly growing Japanese population, Los Angeles. In 1889, when there were 70 Japanese in the city, the only religious organization was the Japanese Young Men's Christian Association. A year later, through the assistance of an American Methodist church the association was reorganized into a Japanese mission. In 1896, the Mission became a church under the leadership of Dr. M. C. Harris. The Rev. T. Nakamura was appointed the first pastor. Between 1897 and 1901, 125 members were received into the Church. For nearly ten years this organization was the only one of its kind in the Japanese community. It was the community center, and within it were found a free employment agency, dormitory, English school, and a charity agency.²

The Presbyterian work began in 1902. From the beginning an English night school was a basic part of the program. Later, it was enlarged so that it included a three year preparatory course for high school entrance. Besides the principal there were seven assistants. A devotional service was held after each session, and on Sundays Bible classes and preaching services. In 1905, a church was organized with an enrollment of 46.³ In 1914, a union of the Presbyterian Church with two Congregational churches in the Japanese community was attempted, but proved unsuccessful. However, a successful union church came

1. Ozaki, Norio., Op. Cit., ch. III

2. Program, 30th Anniversary Service, 1934

3. Ozaki, N., Op. Cit., ch. III

into being in 1918, the Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles. A building costing \$200,000 was erected in 1923. This church receives aid from the extension board of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches.¹

One of the outstanding churches in the Japanese community, the Christian Church, found its beginning in an English and Bible class sponsored by the Rev. B. F. Coulter of the Broadway Christian Church. It proved such an attraction that a church was established four years later, in 1908. A three story brick building was erected in 1914, which made possible an intensive program with sewing classes for mothers, kindergarten, dormitory, and a cafeteria, besides language classes. In recent years a new educational plant and a church building have been erected. Formerly called the Japanese Christian Institute, it is now a regular Disciples church, the Japanese Christian Church.²

The first Catholic mission was established in Los Angeles in 1911. In 1920, the Maryknoll Order took charge and began educational work among the children. The church and school have grown considerably, and at present there are 450 members in the church and over 400 in the school. It is estimated that approximately fifteen per cent of the enrolled students are Catholics. The program of the Maryknoll Mission is extensive, including a children's home and a sanatorium. The St. Francis Xavier Church, which is the proper designation for this institution, has perhaps the most adequately equipped plant in Los Angeles.³

The beginning of the Terminal Island Baptist work is an interesting one. K. T. Shiraishi was appointed missionary to this field, formerly called East San Pedro, in 1917. A kindergarten was

1. Shiraishi, K. T., Japanese Baptists In Southern California Are Marching On, Pamphlet, August 1939, p. 8
2. Japanese Holiness Church in Los Angeles, A Brief History of the Japanese Holiness Church in Los Angeles, Reisei (monthly magazine), June 1931
3. Ozaki, N., Op. Cit., ch. III

started in a fisherman's kitchen which within a month had an enrollment of 15. Requested to move out from the kitchen, the kindergarten removed to a net barn for their meetings. A knitting class and an English class were started by some interested women from the First Baptist Church of San Pedro. With the increasing influx of Japanese into this district, a church was erected by the Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society and the Rev. H. Y. Shibata called as its first leader. It is said that there is no work so well known in Southern California for its noteworthy conversions.¹

From a small group of five students, who were accustomed to gather for prayer at the Trinity Church of the California Bible School in Los Angeles, was born the nucleus of the Japanese Holiness Church. A small church was organized at the Trinity Church in April, 1921, "Toyo Shen-kyo-kai" (Association for Evangelizing the Oriental). The Rev. S. Kuzuhara, of the Holiness Church of Japan, was the first pastor. Characteristic of this group was their zeal in evangelism. Within ten years this group had established churches in Modesto and San Diego, California, and two churches and a mission in Hawaii.² In the last decade churches have been organized in San Lorenzo, Centerville, San Fernando, and Baldwin Park, California, besides one in Seattle, Washington. Until 1932 the Holiness churches were under the Oriental Missionary Society of the Holiness Church of Japan, but at that time connections were severed and the Holiness Church Federation of North America was formed.³

Of interest is the formation of the Japanese Seventh Day

1. Ibid., ch. III.

2. Baker, J.C., Baptist History of the North Pacific Coast, (American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1912) p. 346.

Adventist Church in 1933. A small group of doctors, graduates of the White Memorial Hospital, gathered in one of the lecture rooms to organize the Church. This group has a very close connection with the American Adventist Church in the same block. A large lecture room of the White Memorial Hospital is used for services. All the children, young people, medical cadets, and women are trained in the American Church. Only the regular church members are trained independently of the American Church.¹

There are a number of other Japanese churches of different denominations in Los Angeles. This is natural since the city is the key center of Japanese population in the United States. Approximately twelve Protestant denominations are represented in the city alone.

III. Seattle

Our next center of attention is Seattle. It, too, was a point of entry for immigrants from Japan, and many had settled there. The first church to be organized was the Japanese Baptist Church in the year 1897 with five members and with the Rev. F. Okazaki as pastor. In its early years, the work took the form of a Young Men's Christian Association, with its regular officers and Board of Managers. A boarding house and lodging house of twenty-seven rooms provided pleasant quarters for the young men.² Later, a fine brick structure, including a gymnasium, was erected.

The Methodist work was founded in the year 1904, the Presbyterian and Episcopalian in 1906, and the Congregational in 1907. Three of them, the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, were some-

1. Fife, Nellie E., Work Among Japanese in Seattle, (The Christian Movement in Japan, Methodist Publishing House, Tokyo, 1908) p. 349

2. Interview, Father Tibesar

what institutional in character, each having a boarding department and a night school for young men.¹

The most lavishly equipped plant in Seattle is the Catholic Maryknoll Mission and parochial school established in 1920. Provision is made for a standard education up to and including the eighth grade, and a Japanese language school for high school students. The majority of the 200 pupils enrolled are non-Catholics.²

Other religious institutions in Seattle include the Seventh Day Adventist, begun in 1922, Salvation Army in 1922, and Holiness in 1933.

IV. Other Localities

In our survey of Japanese churches thus far, we have seen the development of Christianity in the main centers of Japanese population: namely, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle. Christian work sprang up in proportion to population increase. Where a need was felt some individual or a group of individuals responded and subsequently the seed was sown for the establishment of a church. The Japanese population, however, was not confined to the aforementioned cities. As agricultural and other economic opportunities opened up, those openings were quickly seized by the adventurous Japanese. Very few penetrated beyond the Rockies, a few migrated to the Mountain States, while the majority remained in the Pacific States. Christian work in these far-flung communities has been relatively recent in development. Most of the communities have some sort of Christian work, although a great deal still needs to be done in improving the quality.

The story of the founding of these missions and churches is a romantic one. Usually a single individual, or a group with courage enough to translate their vision into reality, were instrumental in the laying of Christian foundations in a community. The following will illustrate the way such foundations were laid.

From the State of Washington comes a story of the result of one young man's conversion. Young Shigaya came to America from Japan while a boy in 1910. While working as a schoolboy at the home of Mrs. Ellen Marbuck in Kent, a farming community, Shigaya was converted to the Christian faith. Being a faithful Buddhist devotee, this was a drastic change in the young lad's life. He was christened Paul by the Episcopalian rector, Dr. Army, in Kent. Paul immediately began a Sunday School for the Japanese children of that community in the local Episcopal Church. The Sunday School grew so rapidly that in a few years it was necessary to move to an old abandoned schoolhouse nearby. There Paul started a Japanese language school, supplementing his religious program. Before Paul had left the community for medical training, the number of communicants numbered approximately 100, nearly all of them Japanese-American children from his Sunday School. After his departure, the work was carried on by the Rev. Paul Ito of Seattle. However, this was short lived, for within a few years, the new leader passed away. Ten years elapsed before another leader was available, the Rev. D. Kitagawa, who arrived on the field in 1939. It is now progressing to the extent that the Domestic Mission Board of the Episcopal Church has appropriated \$5000 toward a fund for the erection of a combination social hall and chapel. An \$18,000 unit is being planned for

1. Interview, The Rev. D. Kitagawa

2. Oriental on the Pacific Coast, The Presbyterian Advance, Oct. 28,
1926, p. 8

the near future.¹

A story of consecrated group of Japanese Christians comes to us from a fishing community, Monterey, in California. It is graphically depicted in the words of Dr. Philip F. Payne, former superintendent of Presbyterian Missions among the Orientals:

Last year one of the board's secretaries was called to Monterey by the Japanese who were meeting in an old store building instead of a church. Six representative Japanese met the secretary and after an Oriental meal one of the Japanese said, "We need a church and we called on you to see what could be done. Now it isn't for ourselves we ask it. We are fishermen and every night when our catch is in we tie our boats together and have our prayer meeting. But our children, they must have a Sunday School." "Well," said the secretary, "the board has a big debt this year and we are very poor, but if the Board of National Missions could help a little, what could you do?" The leader of the group talked it over and said, "If the board will help us we will give our entire catch of tuna this year for a church, and we will guarantee it to bring in \$2000." The deal was made.²

The Church was dedicated on October 24, 1926. It was built at a cost of \$15,000, of which two-thirds was raised among the Japanese people and American friends on the Peninsula.

From a small farming community in the Imperial Valley of California comes a thrilling story of a community "mass" movement into the Christian faith. Up until 1924 there had been only one Christian family in Coachella and Indio, the Sakai family. One day a traveling fieldman for a produce company came into the valley to contract for produce. He was a faithful Christian and in the course of his conversation with Mr. Sakai, gave him a copy of Dr. Kagawa's book, "Across the Death Line". Mr. Sakai being much impressed by this book passed it on to his non-Christian neighbors to read, and soon the book was read by every adult in the Japanese colony. Evidently, they were much impressed by the au-

1. Letter, Kenji Nakane

thor's Christian life and philosophy. In the spring of 1925 when Dr. Kagawa came to America, his itinerary included Riverside, California. The whole colony of Japanese in Coachella and Indio turned out to hear him preach. Two women made their decision to become Christians at that time. On May 7, others accepted Christ, and in June, twenty-four became Christians and accepted baptism. The remaining nineteen adults were baptized in September of the same year. In November of that year, the Friends of Jesus Church of Coachella was formally organized and dedicated. Through the cooperation of a Mr. Robinson, who donated an acre of land and \$1,000, a church was built in 1929. In a true Kagawa expression of Christianity, the Church has a Consumers Cooperative for food and a Credit Union, and has been responsible for a Cooperative Farmers Association.¹

A story of a Community enterprise started by a group of interested Church women comes to us from Salem, Oregon. The first seed of the Christian faith had been laid in home meetings which began in 1923, among the various Japanese homes. Several years later, the Salem Federation of Interdenominational Missionary Societies became interested in the Japanese. As a result, in March, 1927, a kindergarten building was completed and dedicated. Eleven Japanese and three Korean children were enrolled. In 1928, the Federation, now known as the Salem Council of Church Women decided to call the first Japanese pastor, the Rev. Mr. Norisue, to work among the Japanese. With the help of various leaders, the Church has grown steadily through the years. It is now located at Hazel Green in Salem, and has a membership of 62 out of a total Japanese population of 137.

1. Letter, Hiroshi Kaneko

Such is the story of the Salem Japanese Community Church. Since the beginning the American women have encouraged it in every way and contributed liberally to its support. For 13 years they have helped from \$40 to \$120 per month financially. 29 churches in and around Salem are participating in this enterprise through the Salem Council of Church Women. The Methodist Home Mission Board is also helping in a financial way and in providing leadership.¹

The following table will indicate the number of Japanese churches on the Pacific Coast. Fourteen denominations are represented, besides the Catholic Church and non-denominational churches.

V. Table of Churches

<u>Methodist Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
San Francisco	1886	
Oakland	1889	
Sacramento	1891	
Portland	1893	
Fresno	1894	
San Jose	1894	
Los Angeles	1895	
Vacaville	1895	
*Riverside	1902	..... Union with the Congrega- tional Church in 1927
Spokane	1903	
Seattle	1904	
Oxnard	1905	
Bakersfield	1906	
Tacoma	1908	
Denver	1908	
Berkeley United	1909	..... Union with the Christian Church in 1929
Palo Alto		
Loomis	1912	
Florin	1913	
Imperial Valley (Brawley)	1918	
Livingston	1920	

* Federated Churches sponsored jointly by two or more denominations.

<u>Methodist Churches Cont.</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Southern Colorado Circuit (Pueblo)	1920	
Mountain View	1922	
*Salem	1928	.... Organized by Salem Council of Church women
Hood River	1929	
*Santa Maria Union	1929	.... Organized by Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian Church boards
Wapato	1926	
West Los Angeles	1930	
Arizona Circuit	1932	
Marysville	1934	
San Gabriel Valley	1934	
Idaho	1938	

In 1940, at the time of the uniting of the two Methodist groups of the North and the South, four additional churches were added to the above group:

Alameda	1903
Walnut Grove	1913
Oakland	1915
Dinuba	1922
Sonoma County Parish	1928

<u>Congregational Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
San Francisco	1899	.... Union with the Presbyterian Church in 1914
*Los Angeles Union Church	1901	.... Union with the Presbyterian Church in 1918
*Riverside Union	1902	.... Union with the Methodist Church in 1927
Oakland	1906	
Seattle	1907	
San Diego	1907	.... Opening of mission
Fresno	1907	
Santa Barbara	1912	
*Pasadena Union	1913	.... Organized by Friends and Congregational Church boards
*Salt Lake Union	1919	.... Organized by Presbyterian and Congregational Church boards
*Ogden Union	1927	.... Organized by Presbyterian and Congregational Church boards

* Federated Churches sponsored jointly by two or more denominations.

<u>Congregational Churches</u> <u>Cont.</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Yakima	1928	
*Santa Maria Union	1929	.... Organized by Methodist, Congregational, and Pres- byterian Church boards
Montebello	1932	

<u>Presbyterian Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
San Francisco	1885	.... Union with the Congrega- tional Church in 1914
Salinas	1898	.... Opening of mission
Watsonville	1901	
*Los Angeles Union	1903	.... Union with the Congrega- tional Church in 1918
Wintersburg	1904	
Seattle	1906	
Hanford	1907	
Stockton	1909	
Sacramento	1912	
Long Beach	1905	
Hollywood	1916	
Monterey	1926	
Cortex	1927	

<u>Baptist Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Seattle	1899	
Gardena	1914	
Terminal Island	1918	
Sacramento	1920	
Los Angeles (Boyle Heights)	1926	
-Winslow	1926	
-Pomona	1928	
-Garden Grove	1928	
Clearwater	1935	
-Bellevue		
-Mayhew		
-Oak Park		

- * Federated Churches sponsored jointly by two or more denominations.
- Mission Stations

<u>Free Methodist Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Los Angeles	1912	
Berkeley	1920	
Anaheim	1921	
Santa Monica	1925	
-Stanton		
-Irvine		
-Upland		
Phoenix	1931	
Redondo	1937	
-Palos Verdes		
Gallup	1937	
Stockton	1938	
-Stege		

<u>Holiness Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Los Angeles	1921	
Modesto	1924	
San Lorenzo	1929	
San Diego	1930	
Centerville	1931	
Seattle	1933	
San Fernando	1933	
Baldwin Park	1933	

<u>Christian Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Berkeley	1900	Union with the Methodist Church in 1929
Los Angeles	1904	
San Bernardino	1912	

<u>Reformed Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
San Francisco	1910	
Los Angeles	1920	
West Los Angeles	1925	

<u>Episcopal Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Los Angeles	1908	
Seattle	1908	
San Francisco	1909	

- Mission Stations

<u>Salvation Army</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
San Francisco	1919	
Los Angeles	1919	
Fresno	1919	
Stockton	1919	
Sacramento	1920	
Seattle	1922	
Oakland	1923	
San Jose	1924	

<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Los Angeles	1911	
San Francisco	1912	
Seattle	1920	

<u>Church of Christ</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Los Angeles	1923	

<u>Seventh Day Adventist</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
San Francisco	1923	
Mountain View	1928	
Los Angeles		
Sacramento		
Oakland		

<u>Independent Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Hollywood Independent	1917	
Calexico Independent	1920	
El Centro Union	1920	
Coachella "Friends of Jesus"	1929	
Glendale Union Church	1931	
San Mateo Union Church		
Berkeley Laymen's Church		

<u>Friends</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Norwalk		

<u>Summary of Federated Churches</u>	<u>Year of Establishment</u>	<u>Denominations</u>
Pasadena Union	1913	Congregational and Friends
Los Angeles Union	1918	Congregational and Presbyterian
Salt Lake Union	1919	Congregational and Presbyterian
Riverside Union	1927	Congregational and Methodist
Ogden Union	1927	Congregational and Presbyterian
Salem	1928	Supported by the Salem Council of Church Women and the Methodist Home Mission Board
Santa Maria Union	1929	Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist
Berkeley Union	1929	Methodist and Christian

CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JAPANESE CHURCH

The Japanese Church on the Pacific Coast is characterized by certain distinctive qualities or traits. Any institution carries within it the influence of the social and cultural heritage of the people of which it is composed. In the history of the Christian Church, the Christian message has been adapted to the needs of people and as a result a Christianity indigeneous to that people and its environment has resulted. Basically, human needs are the same and the constants of the Christian message have proven adequate for human experience. However, distinctive characteristics, although marginal in their importance, have been the accompaniment of the Christian message wherever it has gone. This has been true in the Japanese Church on the Pacific Coast, and we shall discuss in this chapter the traits which characterize that body of Christians.

I. Source of Membership

The Japanese Church is distinctive in that it draws its membership exclusively from the Japanese race. English speaking services for the young people are rapidly finding their places in the churches and eventually the term "Japanese Church" will be no doubt dropped.

Unlike people from Europe who have had some sort of a Christian background, the great majority of Japanese Christians have come from the traditional Buddhist faith. Only a few have come from Shintoist or Christian background. It can be seen, therefore, that acceptance of the

1. Average of some 25 reporting ministers in questionnaires.

2. A representative survey of 26 churches revealed that the adult membership was just a fraction over the Nisei membership in number.

3. Interview, The Rev. Mr. Kawamorita

Christian faith has meant the breaking of traditional ties. In an environment congenial to Christianity, the break has not created hardships or difficulties as in Japan.

The average age of the first generation Japanese is about fifty-four.¹ In ten or fifteen years, the Nisei (American-born Japanese) will form the dominant membership in the churches. At present the membership exclusive of the Sunday School is about on an equal basis.²

II. Language

It is generally supposed that the primitive church used the Japanese language as its medium of preaching. However, at the beginning there were very few ministers from Japan. The early teachers and leaders were mostly interested American Christians. Therefore, the first preaching and teaching were in English, interpreted for the audience by a Japanese interpreter.³ In the course of time, leadership developed among the newly won converts and preaching in the native tongue began to take place. As the Japanese community grew in America, children came into the home. The need of religious education was felt, and American Christians assumed leadership responsibilities in the Sunday School. This is the stage of development which characterized a great many of the Japanese churches until recently, and does to some extent yet. However, in most Sunday Schools, the Nisei or second-generation young people are helping in the religious education program. A majority of the churches may be called bi-lingual churches, utilizing both the English and Japanese languages. The adults still continue with their services in the native tongue, while their children attend Sunday School, young people's meetings, and worship

1. Interview, Frank Herron Smith

services conducted in English.

III. Financial Support

Relatively few churches have as yet achieved the stage of self-support. Outstanding in their independence financially are the Holiness, Free Methodist, and the Independent churches which began without any denominational affiliations. Only nine out of the thirty-seven Methodist Episcopal Churches are self-supporting.¹ The majority of the churches are still supported by home mission boards.

One reason for the failure of the Japanese church to achieve financial independence may be due to the fact that so many of the older members who constitute the backbone of the church are rapidly passing away. As the ranks of the loyal first generation membership decrease, their places are being filled by children now rapidly attaining maturity. Between the first and second generation Japanese there is a distinct gap; instead of a steady stream of mature membership, a group of young people are taking over. A great majority of the Nisei are still in school or college and unable to support the church in a financial way. The problem would be solved if the married Nisei young people would assume their responsibilities, but it is a rarity to find that group active in the church. This group comprises one of the acute problems in the present day Japanese church program. The future of self-supporting churches will depend not on the first generation Christians, but on the Nisei young people.

An interesting characteristic of the Japanese church is that in most cases the community helps in its support. Annual house to house

1. Interview, Mrs. Miyamoto
2. Letter, Marvel Maeda
3. Interview, Major Abe
4. Payne, Philip, Gold Mountain, Friendship Press, New York, 1934,
pp. 88-90
5. Interview, Robert Sakai

canvasses are held in many of the smaller communities. Buddhists and non-Christians besides the Christians aid financially through bazaars, moving picture shows, and entertainments sponsored by the different churches. In many cases this method returns a high rate of income. The Japanese Catholic bazaar in San Francisco which is held once a year is said to net approximately one thousand dollars.¹ The young people's group in El Centro, California, in its last annual carnival earned an income of five hundred dollars.² A Methodist church in Tacoma recently raised four hundred and fifty dollars. Such means of raising money has become a custom among the majority of Japanese churches.

In some instances financial support is solicited in wider circles than in the local community. This happens usually in a program for a new building. The well equipped Social Hall and Children's Home of the Salvation Army in San Francisco was made possible by a nation-wide solicitation by Major Kobayashi.³

The most unique plan in church finance is revealed in a gasoline filling station project of the Watsonville Japanese Presbyterian Church. Profits from the gasoline retailed through the station went into a fund for the building of the present plant. At the outset the station opened under the name, "The Moses Filling Station," for had not Moses led the Children of Israel out of the wilderness? So the members reasoned that similarly the station would lead them out of financial difficulty.⁴ The gasoline station is still in operation. This year, the members of the Florin Methodist Church likewise adopted the plan of buying gasoline in a group to help raise money for their church.⁵

1. The North American Advocate, May, 1941 - Vol. 24, No. 5.

Of interest is the method used by the Friends of Jesus Church of Coachella for financing its program. This is a non-denominational self-supporting Church. A farmer's distributing cooperative is supported by the membership of the Church. From each crate of produce sold through this cooperative a small percentage is deducted for support of the Church. In this way the financial problem has been successfully met.¹

To sum up, the majority of the Japanese churches have not as yet achieved the stage of self-support. Financially independent churches result mostly from the polity of the denominations which they represent. The Holiness and Free Methodist churches have emphasized a sacrificial ministry, and self-support followed as the result of such emphasis. Non-denominational churches by necessity had to start out without outside aid. The creativity of Japanese Christians has been revealed in several instances in unique methods of financing.

IV. Indifference Toward Denominations

From the very beginning the Japanese church has followed traditional denominational lines. This is due to the fact that American missionaries worked through that channel. Consequently, Japanese Christians adopted the denominational pattern of their leaders as a matter of course. Historical heritage had little meaning for the converts.

Because of this lack of traditional background, denominational lines have meant relatively little in the life of the Japanese church. There has always been a mutual relationship between different groups. An early record gives us a picture of this:

1. Fife, Nellie E., Work Among Japanese in Seattle, The Christian Movement in Japan, Tokyo, Methodist Publishing House, 1908, p. 351

2. Nitobe, Inazo, Bushido, The Soul of Japan, p. 51.

3. Kobayashi, M., A New Evangelical Movement Among the Japanese on the Pacific Coast, pamphlet, 1912, p. 9.

The utmost harmony and good fellowship prevail among these various missions. A ministers' meeting and a union prayer meeting each hold meetings once a month. There is even an interdenominational quartet with a member from each of the four organized churches, to aid all the churches in turn in the service of song.¹

Receiving his nurture in a deonominational body, the Japanese Christian by his inborn sense of loyalty remained with whatever group had first contacted him. Perhaps the sense of loyalty can be best understood in the light of the Bushido ethical system which regarded loyalty as its prime keystone.²

The Dendo-Dan or Japanese Interdenominational Board of Missions, which was established in 1911, reveals the indifference of Japanese to strict denominational lines. Through this organization various denominational bodies in California banded together for cooperative evangelistic work. One of the subsidiary purposes of this organization was to bring all Japanese churches into one organic union. A Committee on union was appointed for the express purpose of working on the union of all Japanese churches.³

A union of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in San Francisco in the year 1914 was the result of this general longing for organic unity. But the ideal was never realized and no further progress was made. However, through the years in the State of California there have come into existence eight union churches. Two other union churches are found in Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah.

There exists a desire on the part of a sizeable minority for union churches or a united Christendom. This is usually found among those who have but little knowledge of the Christian heritage and tradition. A factor to be taken into consideration for this sentiment is the

1. Interview, The Rev. Taro Goto

2. Interview, The Rev. M. Nishimura

trait of gregariousness in the Japanese people. Individualism is a rare quality. In a corporate group has been found strength. One pastor expresses the sentiment of some of the first generation as that of a united Japanese church similar to the United Church of Japan.¹

However, denominational consciousness has grown in Southern California in recent years. The Baptists, Holiness, and Free Methodist groups have demonstrated a denominational loyalty which has quickened other denominations to a competitive reaction. Denominational consciousness on the part of the Holiness and Seventh Day Adventist churches has been largely due to the distinctive doctrines which characterize their groups.

A deep Christian experience and the trait of loyalty welded the first generation Christian to the church which first reached him. For the new American, a realization that traditionally organized bodies provide the most effective means of extending the kingdom will play a great part in continuance of denominational lines. Loyalty to a church will be insured when there is vitality and life in the organization. In some cases this may involve deviation from the polity of the parent denomination. Such is the case of the Japanese Free Methodist Conference which is the only Conference in the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church in America permitting instrumental music within the worship center. At the General Conference at Winona Lake in 1939, a lively debate arose over this, the Pacific Coast Free Methodist Churches trying to get music into the American churches as well as the Japanese. Only the Japanese Conference was given the exception.²

In summary, most of the churches have accepted denominational lines handed down by American missionaries and friends. A few union churches have been attempted. Fellowship in an organized body, plus education in its distinctive heritage, will no doubt make for continuance of denominational lines.

V. Leadership

The leadership of the early mission work was mainly in the hands of interested American Christian workers. From the ranks of the early converts arose leaders who were to take over the task of evangelizing their own countrymen. A distinctive characteristic of these young leaders was an intense desire to know more of their newly acquired faith. This resulted in painstaking preparation on the part of many. The majority of the leaders came from Japan, however. Out of forty-one pastors consulted, fourteen have had training in both Japan and America; six have received their training in America; eight have had a partial seminary training or completed a Bible School course, and three have had no academic preparation. Considering the fact that these leaders had the handicap of a foreign language, the number with some training speaks well for a qualified ministry. The majority of these men are younger than the average first generation.

A distinctive weakness in the Japanese church is in the lay movement. Very few churches have men's clubs. The Pacific Japanese Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church draws very few laymen; mostly ministers are represented.

1. Interview, The Rev. Taro Goto

2. Unoura, K., Religious Education of the Japanese in California,
B.D. Thesis, 1917, Pacific School of Religion, p. 23.

There are two possible reasons for the weakness of the lay movement. The first is that laymen were not trained for leadership. Religious education began after the children came and did not touch the adult membership. Secondly, universal suffrage and participation in the democratic process were unknown in traditional Japan. The first generation were never trained in the art of participation in social groups. Thereupon they did not possess a sense of social responsibility as individuals in a group.¹

VI. Place of Literature

A noticeable characteristic in literature is the transition from monthly periodicals of individual churches to united publication efforts and church bulletins. In the early period of the Japanese Church, there was characterized a zealousness for the spread of the Christian Gospel through extensive use of literature. Earnest testimonies and enthusiasm were expressed in these monthly magazines. A list of periodicals published in the year 1917 gives us an indication of the popularity of monthly literature:²

Christian Periodicals published outside of California

The Dendo Jiho	Presbyterian	Seattle, Wash.
The Hokubei Kyoho	Methodist Episcopal	Seattle, Wash.
Kibo	Congregational	Seattle, Wash.
The Kyohu	Y.M.C.A.	Chicago, Ill.
Shinrei Kyokai	Baptist	
Shimpo	Congregational	New York City
The Japanese Student	International Y.M.C.A.	
Manabi no Tomo	Catholic	

Christian Periodicals Published in California

The Shin Tenchi	The Dendo-Dan	3000
The Gokkyo	Methodist Episcopal	1000
The Dendo Geppo	Presbyterian	500
The Nank no Hikari	Congregational	300
The Shin Shimei	Episcopal	300
Kirisuto Kyokai Ho	Christian	150
The Moneta Bungei	Baptist	100
The Hokubei Fujin Shinpo	Japanese W.C.T.U.	800
The Joshi Seinen	Y.W.C.A.	500

Total 6,650

At the present time periodicals among the Japanese churches have dwindled down to the following:

The Hokka-no-Hikari, quarterly of the Japanese Church Federation of Northern California	1200
The Senkyo, quarterly issued by the General Council of Japanese Christian Federation in North America	3500
Shin-ten-ghi, Presbyterian Conference, bi-monthly	1000
North American Advocate, Methodist	1200

Total 6,900

In comparison with the past, we can see that there has been a transition from periodicals issued by individual churches to that of an united effort on the part of church groups. There is a noticeable decline in the amount of publication material distributed, the present circulation of quarterlies and bi-monthly periodicals being only slightly higher than the monthlies published in the State of California alone in 1917. However, the majority of the churches have adopted weekly bulletins similar to those put out by the American churches. Literature from Japan is used to some extent in America, especially Dr. Kagawa's "Kingdom of God" weekly, and the Salvation Army "War Cry."

1. Interview, The Rev. Mr. Kawamorita

2. Johnson, Herbert, The Japanese on the Pacific Coast, The Christian Movement in Japan, Fukuin Printing Co., L'd., Yokohama, 1914, p. 310.

The reasons for the decline of Christian literature is attributed to several factors. Lack of sufficient funds and capable editorship are mentioned.¹ Reading matter in the home has been supplemented by the daily Japanese news and a great variety of literature from Japan. However, a cause lying deeper may be the loss of the evangelistic enthusiasm which characterized the earlier period. The first generation converts were in their prime of life then, and zealous in their Christian expression, but now age has taken its toll in enthusiasm.

VII. Conflict With Traditional Religions of Japan

Another of the distinctive characteristics of the Japanese Church has been its competition with Buddhism. In earlier days there were no Buddhist missions. The Christian faith was eagerly studied and embraced by the new comers. It seems that Buddhism began to take hold before 1914, as is indicated by an article written during that period:

In the earlier days of our mission work among the Japanese on this coast, the conditions were different from now. Then there was very little competition.... Then there were no Buddhist Missions, and in this new land of freedom it was comparatively easy to break with the religious systems of the past. Now there are Buddhist organizations, generally with fine property, in all the cities and larger towns where we have mission. While they cannot supply the Bread of Life, they appear to meet the religious needs of those not specifically attracted by Christianity.²

The present period has been characterized by a so-called revival of Buddhism. Conferences of Buddhist young people attract more than Christian gatherings. Costly structures far superior to Christian churches are found in the major cities on the coast. There is a definite

1. Letter, Fred Fertig

competitive attitude between the two religious groups. Christianity is aggressive, whereas Buddhism is on the defensive. This is seen in the adaptations that Buddhism is making in America. The Bon-san or priest now bears the title, "The Reverend". Formerly, he could not perform marriages, now he is permitted to do so. The O-tera or temple has become the "Church". Religious education was foreign to Buddhism but now there are Buddhist Sunday Schools. Hymns and tunes of the Christian faith have been copied and adapted to their faith. The Young Men's Buddhist Association and the Young Women's Buddhist Association have been set up in competition to the Y.E.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. movements.

To an outside observer, the similarity between Christianity and Buddhism is quite apparent in organization and activities. But in spirit there is a great difference. Buddhism may exist as a social organization and a sense of loyalty will make for its continuance for a long while. But for the young Nisei there exists difficulties. In the testimonies of two young converts from the Buddhist faith is found something of the difference between the two religions: "Christians have more discussions and are more democratic in procedure... Christians deal more closely and regularly with vital daily life issues." It is hard to understand what Buddhist religion is all about, priests talk in Tibetan," etc.¹

In the conflict between Christianity and Buddhism, the question is how powerful tradition and loyalty are in the preservation of certain ideologies. For a Nisei to become a Buddhist priest, he must go back to Japan and study for the priesthood. At least one Nisei has returned to Japan for training in recent years. Unless a

1. Ideas contained in this subdivision were from interviews with the Rev. S. Hashimoto and the Rev. K. Kimura.

capable and trained leadership is available, American Buddhism will lose out as a religious movement, to continue perhaps only as a traditional social organization.

VIII. Traditional Elements in the Church

Incorporated into the life of the Japanese Church are certain observances which have their origin in the traditions of old Japan. One of the common rites is that called the Tsuito-kai which is a survival from Buddhism. This is a series of memorial services practiced following the death of some member of the church. The meetings are held in the following order: the 7th day following death, the 49th, the 100th, a year, the third year, the seventh and the thirteenth years. Usually the first few memorial services are all that are observed.¹

In connection with deaths there is a common tradition called the Tsuya or "vigil". The night before the funeral a service in memory of the departed one is held. Originally, the custom was for the participants to keep an all night vigil accompanied by feasting. However, most meetings at present do not follow that strict discipline. Usually a Christian Tsuya includes hymns, prayer, eulogies, a devotional message followed by a midnight meal and fellowship.

Weddings were usually followed by a "Hiro-kai", an elaborate feast, usually a Chinese dinner. This originates from a common tradition. For the sake of economy this tradition is being rapidly abandoned by the Nisei. Other minor practices in the Church which originate from a common tradition are Ike-bana or flower arrangements, Katei-shu-kai or home prayer meetings, and memorial offerings. The

last named is observed on such occasions as weddings, deaths, restoration to health after an illness, births, departures and similar significant days.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPHASES OF THE JAPANESE CHURCH

There are certain phases in the Japanese Church program which have received sufficient attention to mark them as being the major points of emphases. An accentuated stress was placed on institutional work of an educational and social nature in the early days. This has always been flexible, taking forms adapted to different periods and their needs. Attention is centered, today, on educational, spiritual, and recreational needs of young people; and on different types of cooperative enterprises. Evangelism has held a key position of interest in the life of the Church. The impulse to cooperation is a noteworthy Christian expression.

I. Institutional Work of the Past

The genius of Christianity lies in its power of adaptation to new situations and meeting of human needs. This was true of the Japanese Church. As the early immigrants came over, there were definite problems confronting them: language, room and board, employment, occidental customs and culture, and a host of similar difficulties arising from a new environment. The Christian Church was the first institution to step into this breach and help meet human needs. A description of the Seattle Japanese Baptist work, clipped from a newspaper in 1898, may be of interest:

The boys have very pleasant quarters at 418 Jefferson Street. Here they have a boarding and lodging-house of twenty-seven rooms, with a well-supplied reading room, in which are found

1. Baker, J.C., Baptist History of the North Pacific Coast, American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1912, pp. 346, 347.

2. Johnson, H., Op. cit., p. 310.

papers and magazines, both in English and in Japanese. Strangers are taken here, cared for, and made to feel at home. An efficient committee meets at the dock every Oriental steamship, and all Japanese landing are befriended and taken to this home if they have nowhere else to go. Services are also held on board the steamships for the Japanese sailors. Tracts are distributed, and good advice given. Fully seven hundred "comfort bags", containing needles, thread, buttons, pin cushions, and tracts in Japanese, have been furnished by this Y.M.C.A. and the Tabernacle Church and given to these Japanese sailors; one hundred and seventeen of these were given out on one boat lately in port.

School sessions for the study of English and of the Bible are held nearly every week-day afternoon and evening, with an average attendance of fifteen boys. Sunday School for Bible study is held at 4 P.M., while on Sunday evenings there is a regular evangelistic service, to which the boys have personally invited their fellow-countrymen.¹

Institutional work came into being through needs of the early immigrants. Then, there were no hotels or boarding houses, so the Mission Homes became popular. English night schools conducted by churches became a necessity to the new immigrant. There were no employment agencies, so the churches acted in that capacity. However, in later years the Japanese communities began to assume their social responsibilities. As early as 1914, changing conditions created the need for rethinking of the Christian program.²

Work for women constituted an important feature in the life of the Japanese Church. Four homes were established on the Pacific Coast: the Japanese Baptist Women's Home of Seattle was founded in 1903, the Ellen Stark Ford Home of San Francisco in 1907, and during the year 1912 were established the Jane Couch Home in Los Angeles and the Catherine Blaine Home in Seattle. All but the first were sponsored by the Methodist Episcopal denomination. One of the early leaders describes her work as that of "teaching them English, securing

1. Fife, Nellie E., Japanese Women's Home, Seattle, (The Christian Movement in Japan, 1909) p. 376

2. Miss Florence Rumsey.

3. Unoura, K., Religious Education of the Japanese in California, (Unpublished B.D. thesis, Pacific School of Religion, 1917) p. 20.

employment for them, helping them with their shopping.....all these things help us to win their hearts, as they see the love of Christ exemplified in these practical ways."¹ The program in these homes varied from time to time depending upon existing needs. Records show that sewing, cooking, language classes both in Japanese and English, Bible classes, Red Cross instruction, and children's work were engaged in. Weddings were held in these homes and the ideals of American home life taught.

The contribution of these homes in helping Japanese women to make their adjustment to American life is immeasurable. The value of such work is expressed in the annual report of the Japanese Baptist Women's Home in Seattle for 1920-21:

The first seven months of our current year Miss French was still on the field carrying on the very important work for the newly arrived Japanese women. We should be thankful that our society had the understanding of the Japanese situation in this Pacific Port and the faith and the devotion to Kingdom building necessary to put Miss French on this field during those two years when the women were coming at the rate of forty a week. (1918-1919) This timely stroke by our Society has been admired, appreciated, and praised by the Japanese themselves in America, and by churches and missions, both Japanese and American.²

In the year 1917, according to one observer, the dominant emphasis in institutional work was in dormitories which were some thirty-three in number. The total of libraries ran approximately into thirty.³

The present period finds the gradual disappearance of such forms of work as the employment agency, English night schools, dormitories, boarding clubs, and work for women. New needs have arisen and the Church has adapted its program accordingly.

1. The Japanese Christian Yearbook, (The Christian Literature Society,
Tokyo, 1940), p. 292.

2. Letter, K. Kubota

II. Present Social Program

The social emphasis of the Japanese Church has found new channels of expression. Emphasis is being placed on young people's work and on cooperative enterprises.

The zenith in Christian social expression which had its champion in Dr. T. Kagawa has found its way across the Pacific to the Japanese on the Pacific Coast. Through cooperative endeavour is the spirit of service being revealed.

In 1921 was founded the "Friends of Jesus" society (Iesu no Tomo) by Dr. Kagawa in Japan. Its purpose was to be "friends of Jesus, to make friends of poor people and labourers, to work for world peace, to value purity of life, and to make service of society one's own purpose".¹ Four years later, 1925, through the assistance of Dr. Kagawa, a similar organization was established in Los Angeles. Inter-denominational in membership, it reaches into ten denominations and thirteen churches. Its activities include: Sunday morning prayer meetings, contribution of 150 yen monthly to Dr. Kagawa's work in Japan, contribution of \$10 monthly to the Southern California Church Federation, and cooperation with the Federation. The membership at present numbers 76. A young people's department was organized in 1939.²

Among the activities of the Southern California Church Federation is the Department of Social Work. This was organized in the year 1914 and carried on by ministers and laymen of the Federation until 1926. At that time Mr. S. Saito, a full-time worker was

1. Ozaki, Norio, Op. cit., ch. III

2. Ibid. Ch. III.

3. Ibid., ch. III.

4. Interview, The Rev. Mr. Kawamorita

5. Letter. K. Nakane.

hired.¹

In 1934 was established a credit cooperative, the Nanka Christian Sinyo Kumiai, by Dr. Kagawa during his evangelistic tour of the Pacific Coast. The purpose of this cooperative is to help in the financial problems of the churches and of individual members. In 1940, the capital amounted to \$14,344.36 of which \$3,500.15 was invested in bonds, and \$4510.00 loaned to churches and members. The members, 250 in 1940, contribute one dollar a month. For each \$25.00 a bond is issued.²

At the same time that the credit cooperative was established, a funeral mutual aid society was formed, the Nanka Christian Kyozaï Hoken. In 1940 the membership was 450. The registration fee is \$2 and a variable sum is assessed each year for dues. Each time a death occurs one dollar is collected from each member. The funeral expenses of the deceased member is assumed by the cooperative.³

Following suit, the Northern California Church Federation has likewise established a funeral mutual aid society. It is run on about the same pattern as its progenitor. The membership enrolled at present is 471. In February, 1941, its assets amounted to \$1,146.90 and debts \$850.73.⁴

There is one rural church in Southern California, the Friends of Jesus Church of Coachella, which has launched out in pioneering social experiments. They have a Consumers' Cooperative for food, a Credit Union, and a Cooperative Farmers' Association.⁵

Emphases on Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. work has been relatively weak. This is due no doubt to the fact that character building was

1. Tomizawa, L., A Brief Account of the Sutter Street Branch of the Y.M.C.A. of San Francisco, (pamphlet issued in 1924)

2. Interview, Mr. Kanai.

3. Ibid.

such a new idea to the Japanese people. There are three Japanese Y.M.C.A. organizations in America: the Chicago Y.M.C.A. was established in 1909, San Francisco founded in 1918, and Los Angeles in 1925.

The San Francisco Y.M.C.A. was begun in conjunction with the Japanese Presbyterian Church near its very beginning by Dr. E. Sturge. In 1914 an attempt was made to make this into an inter-denominational enterprise but failed in receiving public support. A few years later when the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches united, the Y.M.C.A. was disbanded in order that the community would assume responsibility for it. Through the impetus received from the visit of Dr. K. Kato of the Y.M.C.A. of New York City, the Sutter Street Branch Y.M.C.A. was formally organized in 1918 with a membership of forty-five young men.¹ In 1936 a new building was erected at a cost of \$86,000. This is the only Japanese Y.M.C.A. in the country to have a completely equipped building.²

There are three paid workers, and the membership at present is approximately 700 of which 50% come from non-Christian homes. Thirty-five activity groups are included in its program. Although there is no pool, a well-equipped gymnasium is an integral part of the athletic program. The regular program of the Y.M.C.A. is followed with variations to meet specific needs. Among the activities peculiar to this Y.M.C.A. are the English language school for Kibbeis or children born in America and reared in Japan, a Japanese language school, and a mixed Kibbei Club. Being an integral part of the general Y.M.C.A. movement, the Japanese branch receives its support through the Community Chest.³

1. Interview, Miss Kimi Mukaye

2. Letter, Miss Mildred Cummings.

Two Japanese Y.W.C.A. organizations have been established in America: San Francisco and Los Angeles, both in 1912. The regular Y.W.C.A. program is carried on, adapted to the specific needs of their respective communities. Membership in the San Francisco branch is 300 and Los Angeles, 850.

The impetus for the San Francisco Y.W.C.A. sprang from a fellowship group of Japanese women of the various churches. At first its program was directed to the needs of young women arrivals from Japan and their many problems. In recent years, emphasis has necessarily changed to the needs of Nisei women.¹

Of interest is the work of the Baptist Home Mission Society in their Christian Center work among the Japanese. There are three Centers: Seattle, Sacramento, and Terminal Island. In Sacramento the emphasis is strongly recreational for boys, while Seattle and Terminal Island have concentrated on children's and girls' work. The Sacramento Center receives funds from the Community Chest, while the other two fields are supported by the Mission Board, and in the case of Seattle, the nursery school expenses come from the Seattle Baptist Union. The value of these centers in the Japanese community life is difficult to estimate. One observer makes this statement concerning the center at Terminal Island:

It is the only agency which has been able to build up anything permanent. The Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A. and other agencies have attempted to get permanent groups established on the Island but for some reason or other it has seemed impossible. The groups at our center remain and grow year by year, exerting a greater and greater influence on the community. Just at this crisis period the Japanese are turning to our Church and Center.... they say there is no place else for them to go for comfort and courage and even financial help.²

1. Interview, Major Abe and the Rev. N. Ozaki.

2. Sacon, Y.H., Op. cit., pp. 66-68.

3. Kobayashi, M., Op. cit., p. 9.

4. Dearing, J.R., Japanese on the Pacific Coast, (The Christian Movement in Japan, Fukuin Printing Co., L'd. Yokohama, 1913) pp. 481-484

There are three Japanese children's homes in America: two are in Los Angeles, the Shonin Children's Home and the home connected with the St. Francis Xavier Church; and the third is found in San Francisco, the Salvation Army Children's Home. The Shonin Home, which is non-sectarian but under Christian leadership, and the Salvation Army Home are supported by the Community Chest and to some extent by the State of California.¹

III. Cooperation

A characteristic feature of the Japanese Church has been an indifference to denominational lines. This perhaps has been the one most influential factor in the fine spirit of cooperation found among the churches. The first movement among the Japanese churches took place in Southern California in 1906. At this time a group of churches organized the "Southern California Christian Federation".²

An interdenominational board of missions, the Dendo Dan, was organized in May 1911 at San Francisco.³ A year later was founded the Seattle Council of Oriental-American Christian workers.⁴ In 1913 the Southern California Federation united with the Dendo Dan to form the Chuo Dendo Dan or the Central Missionary Society. Because of the intricacies of the organization, the Chuo Dendo Dan was discontinued in 1918, and the Northern California Dendo Dan was dissolved. The Southern California Dendo Dan, however, continued the work, and later in 1931, changed their name to the Southern California Church Federation. Having been impressed by the necessity for the unification of churches, the Northern California Church Federation was

1. Sacon, Y.H., Op. cit., pp. 66-68

2. Interview, Mr. Terazawa

3. Ibid.

4. Fife, Nellie E., Op. cit., p. 351

reorganized in 1924.¹

In the Northwest, an organization bringing together all the churches of the region was set-up in 1930, under the name Northwest Japanese Christian Church Federation. The organization came into existence primarily as a fellowship group, but now has as its program (1) an united missionary effort and (2) cooperation with other federated bodies. Through this body well known Christian leaders are obtained for speaking tours among the Japanese churches.²

During the week of August 5-11, 1939, was held in Los Angeles the Pan-American Japanese Christian Congress, bringing together all Christian bodies in North America. Its purpose was to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of Japanese Christian churches in North America. At this gathering was born the idea for a federated body which would unify all the Japanese Christian churches in America. This sentiment was crystallized into actuality when a group of leaders gathered at Gilroy, California, during July 1-3, 1941 for setting up the organization. The official title of this united organization is the "General Council of Japanese Christian Church Federations in North America". At present it includes the three federated groups in the Northwest, Northern California, and Southern California. Eventually, it is hoped that Hawaii may be a part of this organization.³

Women's organizations have played a prominent part in church life. An inter-denominational movement is evident by the year 1907 when some 70 women were actively participating in the Fujin Kyofukwai.⁴ The only Japanese W.C.T.U. in America today was organ-

1. Interview, Mrs. Takahashi

2. Ozaki, N., Op. cit., ch. III

3. Constitution of the Northwest Young People's Christian Federation,
Article II.

ized in 1906.¹ In modern times, the outstanding women's movement is the Japanese Christian Women's Association Federation of Southern California. This group includes some 13 different women's groups. The general purpose of this Federation is to cultivate the spirit of Christian unity among women, to promote fellowship, and to deepen spiritual living.² Practically every church has a Fujin-Kai or a women's organization.

The young people of the Japanese churches have been most active in inter-denominational enterprises. Especially is this revealed in the Young People's Christian Conference movement. The Rev. S. Kato of Berkeley, California was founder of this inter-denominational fellowship in 1925 at which time some 25 assembled for the first conference. Since then the movement has spread up and down the Coast with attendance running as high as 400 during the past few years in some of the conferences. Besides annual conferences held in the major centers of Japanese concentration: Seattle, the Bay region, and Los Angeles, there are sectional conferences reaching into other centers of Japanese population.

Young people of the Northwest and Southern California have organized Federations similar to that of their parents. The Northwest Japanese Young People's Christian Federation has as its objectives:

- A. To inspire and promote dynamic, personal Christian living.
- B. To further friendship and cooperation among member groups.
- C. To keep members informed on matters of vital interest to all youth.
- D. To promote and coordinate projects and other activities to further the Kingdom of God which could not be accomplished by one group or denomination alone.³

1. Organizational Chart of Southern California Japanese Christian Young People's Federation.

2. According to Miss Florence Rumsey, street preaching continued until about 1920 in Seattle.

Among the responsibilities of the executive cabinet of the Southern California Japanese Christian Young People's Federation Are:

- A. Leadership training -
 - Mar Casa Leaders' Advance
 - Summer Institute or Kaki Gakko
- B. Administration of Fall Conference
- C. Maintain contact with other Christian Youth Groups
- D. Service -
 - Aid to local churches
 - Aid to districts
- E. Sponsor special conferences and rallies
- F. Arrange deputation by leaders¹

In summary, Japanese Christians, including both first and second generations, are very progressive in inter-denominational cooperation. On the whole, there is greater spiritual unity than found in American church circles. Inter-denominational cooperation is an emphasis which is being continually stressed, and the subsequent result was the unifying of Christian forces in the "General Council of Japanese Christian Church Federations in North America." Plans are being made for a gathering of Nisei leaders in the summer of 1942 to discuss the possibilities of a junior chapter under the General Council.

IV. Evangelism

From the beginning evangelism has received the major attention in the Japanese Church. The early converts were zealous in the promotion of the Gospel; distribution of literature, personal visitation, and street preaching were common.² Evangelistic enthusiasm found expression in the beginning of a work in Hawaii in 1887 by the Gospel Society.

1. Interview, Miss Florence Rumsey

2. Unoura, K., Op. cit., p. 19 (from annual report of the Dendo Dan)

3. Kobayashi, M., Op. cit., p. 8

Group evangelism has played a prominent part in the life of the Japanese Church. The outstanding revival in the annals of Japanese Church history took place in the Methodist Church in San Francisco under the preaching of Dr. Kawabe of Japan from July 1889 to December 1891. Within the six months period 400 conversions took place and 188 joined the Church by baptism. This revival had a far reaching significance in its influence on the Japanese Church in general. As a result a number of Methodist churches were established in different parts of the Coast.

From time to time outstanding leaders from Japan were called over to conduct mass meetings sponsored by the various sectional Federations. Meetings would be arranged all along the Coast with well known men such as Paul Kanamori, K. Imai, G. Yamamuro, Kimura, Dr. Sato, Dr. Iwahashi, and Dr. Kagawa. The impetuous brought by such men played an influential part in the building of the Japanese Church.¹

An illustration of effective group evangelism is seen in a successful evangelistic campaign conducted by G. Yamamuro of the Salvation Army in 1917 in the State of California. His campaign resulted in 836 being received into the various churches.²

Of interest is the cooperative inter-denominational evangelistic movement, the Dendo-Dan, instituted in 1911. An evangelist and a secretary were chosen by this newly formed group to promote an intensive program. The evangelist's work was to go to farms and camps in out of the way places, staying and preaching at home meetings. To supplement the work a monthly paper was issued, "The Shin Ten Chi," the monthly circulation running as high as 3000.³

1. Ozaki, N., Op. cit., ch. III

2. Ibid., ch. III.

As one views the last few decades there is seen the weakening of the early evangelistic spirit. A number of reasons are given which may in some measure have effected the life of the Church: anti-Japanese movements, the general trend of indifference among all churches, lack of capable leadership, decline in influence of the Church, and a revival of Buddhism.

However, the emphasis of the Holiness Church on evangelism is noteworthy. A relatively new movement, which began in 1921, it now includes eight churches in the United States and two churches and a mission in Hawaii. Whereas most groups have had mission boards assisting in establishing new churches, the impulse in the Holiness movement has come from within and their policy has always been that of a self-supporting church.

At present, evangelistic campaigns during spring and summer are sponsored throughout Southern California by the Southern California Japanese Church Federation. Pastors of churches within the Federation are chosen to lead in these meetings.¹ The Japanese Methodist Conference has in recent years sponsored "Preaching Missions" in English among its many branches.

The Southern California Japanese Church Federation has a missionary program of great significance. It is administered under the Department of Far East Mission Work. The three projects sponsored by the Federation are: the support of Chinese ministerial students in seminaries in Japan; support of an orphanage near Shanghai, started and managed by Yasuko Kusumoto, a Los Angeles girl; and helping support a mission in Peking.²

A heartening sign during the present period is the returning interest in the Church among the Japanese. The unhappy international crisis is revealing anew the importance of the Christian faith and its place in the life of the world. Sympathetic cooperation on the part of the American churches may mean a new awakening of the Japanese churches on the Coast.

1. Interview, Dr. F. H. Smith
2. Letter, The Rev. K Fukushima
3. Interview, The Rev. Mr. Kawamorita

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NISEI CHURCH

The term "Nisei Church" is a misnomer which is generally used to designate the English speaking division of the Japanese churches. Theoretically, it is not a separate entity isolated from the regular church, but an integral part. Practically speaking, however, a distinct cleavage exists in the Japanese Church because of two different backgrounds existing between the parents and their children, and therefore the term "Nisei Church" has come into being.

I. Extent of English Services

Of the 37 churches listed under the Methodist Conference, 30 have English speaking services.¹ 6 out of 10 Congregational churches conduct services in English.² The Free Methodist and Holiness Churches have 1 English service each. 5 English services are found among the Baptists, and 9 in the Presbyterian Church.³ Each of the 3 Episcopal churches have English worship, and practically all of the Union churches.

II. Assuming of Financial and Leadership Responsibilities

The failure to shoulder financial responsibility is felt by many to be the weakest aspect in the Nisei group. At a mock trial of the Christian Nisei held at the Pan-American Japanese Christian Congress in Los Angeles in 1939, the Nisei was found guilty of financial neglect:

1. Pan-American Japanese Christian Congress In Review, Bulletin

2. Letter, Sadaichi Asai

That the said Nisei Christian Society-at-large, alias the "Nisei Breadwinner," have failed to pledge their allegiance to the churches in their most trying hour; that they have failed to appreciate the Issei support of the church since the inception of the Japanese Church in America; that they have failed to manifest interest and forward financial support whenever possible; that they have failed to catch the vision of a self-supporting Nisei Christian organization and the eventual desire for one, thereby ignoring the certain dire consequences in store for future of the Nisei Church.¹

In recent years the pledge system has been adopted by a great many of the Nisei churches in Los Angeles, although the giving is small. This has been especially true since the average Nisei in Los Angeles belongs to at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ clubs. Financial obligations among the Conservative groups have been greater, since their members usually concentrate their activities within the Church.²

There are several factors for the slowness of the Nisei to respond to their responsibilities. The greatest perhaps is that the majority are still in schools and colleges. An important consideration is that denominational mission boards have so "mothered" and cared for the Japanese churches that many have failed through their own initiative to assume financial responsibilities. It is worthy of note that the non-denominational and Holiness churches have achieved self-independence because they were forced to stand on their own feet from the beginning. This, however, does not mean that their policies were necessarily the best. The place of financial independence for the Nisei Church has yet to come. At present, the great need is education and training in stewardship so that as they assume their places in life they will be willing to share in their financial obligations.

1. Letter, Kayoko Asai

Leadership from the Nisei group has been slow in developing, but gradually promising young men are preparing for the ministry. Eight Nisei are now in training in recognized theological seminaries; an equal number are enrolled in Bible schools, and a number in undergraduate schools are contemplating the ministry. However, the number in training at present is insufficient to assume leadership in the Nisei churches. Because of the lack of Nisei leadership, a great many churches are relying on American pastors and missionaries and undoubtedly will do so for a considerable time. An imperative task of the Japanese Church is to educate and lead its most promising young men into entering full time Christian service. The poor response on the part of the Nisei to the challenge of the Christian ministry may be traced to two possible factors: (1) poor financial remuneration, (2) a more basic reason is the lack of well trained and dynamic leadership for the Nisei.

III. Theological Points of View

A church group usually adopts unconsciously the theology of its leader. The diversity of ideology among leaders of the Nisei have influenced Nisei thinking to a great extent. As in American church circles, both Liberals and Fundamentalists are found among the Nisei. An influential conservative fellowship is the Associated Christian Youth movement founded in 1935. It began purely as a fellowship group among like minded Christians from different denominations. In other words, it was an "extra-curricular" group. Membership at present is about sixty.¹

1. Constitution, Associated Christian Youth, p. 1

The purpose of this organization is best expressed in its constitution. Eligibility of membership is dependent upon belief in the following articles and signing of the constitution:

Article II. DOCTRINE

- Sec. 1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God.
- Sec. 2. We believe there is one God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself to us in three persons, namely: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Sec. 3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son
Was born of a Virgin,
Died on Calvary to make atonement for our sins,
Was buried and resurrected,
Has ascended into Heaven,
Is coming again to receive His own, and
Will return to earth to establish His Kingdom.
- Sec. 4. We believe that the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus Christ to be the Sovereign Administrator of the body of Christ on earth.
- Sec. 5. We believe that man is sinful by nature and choice, and that the only way of salvation is through the shed blood of Christ, and faith in Him as the Sin-bearer and Saviour. We believe that a Christian is born again by the quickening, re-ewing, and cleansing work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.
- Sec. 6. We believe that the church is the body and bride of Christ, consisting of those who believe on Him as Saviour.
- Sec. 7. We believe that there is a personal devil exerting great influence for evil only as God suffers Him to do so. He shall ultimately be cast into Hell.¹

Annual conferences are held at the Bethany Interdenominational Church in Sierra Madre which usually draw around 200 young people. The vitality of this movement is seen in the number of young people who have chosen to enter full time Christian service. At least

1. Letter, Marvel Maedo

2. Letter, The Rev. Jitsuo Morikawa

eight are in training as a result of contact with this group.

The majority of the Nisei are not doctrinally minded. No matter what their thinking on theology and beliefs may be they are seeking for vitality and life in their faith. The programs of the various sectional Y.P.C.C.'s are usually life centered, seeking to integrate religion with the everyday experiences of life. A balance in religious thinking and life is sought for by the average Nisei. One leader expresses a typical sentiment at this point:

We have our troubles. There are some among our group who think we do not stress the fundamentals of the Bible as well as we might. When we do have a fundamental speaker, there are those who say he's old fashioned. We need to hit a happy medium.¹

In summary, the average Nisei is quite similar to the American youth in not being doctrinally minded. The real expression of religion is felt to be not in doctrine, but in the actualization and application of Christianity into the arena of human experience. The heart of the Christian faith, for Nisei youth, according to one pastor, is personal redemption.²

IV. The Future

Over sixty years have transpired since the Japanese Church was founded on the Pacific Coast. It has been a thrilling story of the sacrificial love and devotion of American Christian leaders, the response of the lonely immigrant boy from a far country, meeting of human needs, building of churches and Christian homes, and finally, the transition of emphasis to the Nisei Church. No greater privilege is

there for the Nisei than the opportunity of entering into the Christian heritage made possible through years of sacrifice and toil on the part of their parents and interested American friends. Unlike their first generation parents who came into the Kingdom without Sunday School training, without equipment, and with very little moral support; the Nisei have equipment and buildings waiting to be used, in most churches eager leadership, and the moral support of interested Christian friends.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Our study has carried us back to an examination of the historical background of the Japanese in America. Into this new addition to America's melting pot, the seed of the Kingdom was sown and we have had a panoramic glimpse of the leavening process. Christianity has demonstrated itself as a religion of human need as it adapted itself to the circumstances and conditions surrounding the Japanese people.

The new immigrants to America were without command of English and practically unaware of the customs and traditions of the American people. They were hardy pioneers who came in pursuit of the more abundant life. Although their skin had a different pigment and their physical characteristics were much different from the white American, beneath the heart of the Japanese immigrant throbbed the same aspirations, emotions, and fears as those of any other. There was the same hunger for life and that need was met in the Christian Gospel which has always proved itself sufficient for the needs of mankind. It is to the glory of Christians with the missionary spirit who shared the imperishable message of Christ with these newcomers from the Orient. Through them the Japanese came into contact with the noblest spiritual ideals of America, which are embodied in Christianity. The Christian Gospel has meant personal redemption from sin; social uplift, the purifying and ennobling of home life, and it has provided a bond whereby a common unity of mankind has been realized.

Sacrificial devotion, romance, and humour are sprinkled in the annals of Japanese Church history. Consecration and devotion of Christian leaders laid the foundations for the Japanese Church; the romance of sharing the Gospel led many to new unexplored territories of evangelistic ventures; and one can well imagine the humour of situations where the new bride burned her first cake in the mission home or struggled with occidental clothing for the first time.

From this study we have glimpsed again the significance of Christianity in the life of a people. We have discovered a Christianity indigenous to the Japanese in America. Characteristics which are distinctive have been discovered, the influence of social and cultural heritage from the Orient. They have been in the realm of membership, language, financial support, indifference toward denominational lines, leadership, literature, conflict with Buddhism, and the presence of traditional elements within the Church itself.

There have been discovered certain phases which have received sufficient attention to justify their being called the major points of emphasis in the Japanese Church. Institutional work of an educational and social nature stand out clearly in the early days of the Church. Today, that picture has passed away to be superseded by an emphasis on the educational, recreational, and spiritual needs of young people, and on cooperative enterprises among different denominational groups. Evangelism has held a key position of interest, although there has not been the zeal in recent decades that characterized the period of church beginnings.

1. The 1940 Census reports 126,947 Japanese in the U.S. of which 47,305 were foreign born, and 79,642 American born.
U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Series P-3, #23, p. 1

Over sixty years have transpired since the founding of the first "Gospel Society." During that time approximately 128 churches and missions have come into being, representing 14 denominations besides Catholic and non-denominational groups. Nearly every sizeable Japanese community has been touched by the Christian Gospel. In round numbers some 5000 first generation Japanese have come into the Christian Church. Their average age is around 54 and in 10 to 15 years the day of evangelization for that group will have passed. The greater task lies in winning the Nisei young people.¹ Thousands are without any religious connection. Over a half express their preference for Christianity rather than the traditional religions of Japan. No more hopeful and strategic time exists than now for winning this group for Christ. Nisei Christians, recipients of a rich and glorious heritage, have the rare privilege and opportunity of building for a new tomorrow - a Christian Community in America.

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